An Essay
on
Poisoned Wounds.

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by

James G. Gilchrist

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Poisoned Wounds—

Poisoned ~~xxx~~ wounds, are such, as are inflicted by the injection of a poison into the system, through the medium of wound, puncture or bite. The following varietys are the most commonly met with The stings of bees & insects, the sting or bite of poisonous serpents and reptiles, the bite of rabid animals, and dissection wounds.

The Stings of bees, are the most common and best illustrative variety of this class of wound; they may be very trivial in their character, but then again they have been known to produce ~~xx~~ death by inducing ~~xx~~ severe inflamation, or erysipelas, by the multiplicity of their stings, when a swarm of them have attacked a person and stung him in a great many places; again by the injury being inflicted on some very sensitive organ, as the eye, or has happened in a few cases, in the mouth or fauces, in consequence of

having swallowed a bee, by eating the hony-comb;
but in the great majority of cases no unpleasant or
dangerous symptoms are apt to occur, and apart
from the annoyance they give rise to need little or
no, medical treatment. If the bite has been seen
touching the part with a strong solution of ammonia
will in nearly all cases take the pain and swelling
away almost immediately.

There are some varieties of this
species of poisoning, which are much more dan-
-gerous, and hapily more rare than the stings of
bees or insects of that description; the tarantula, Scorpion
centipede &c, are met with in some latitudes, whose stings
are much dreaded by the natives, as they in all cases
give rise to either troublsome or dangerous symptoms
and have been known to produced fatal results. The bite of the
tarantula is said to create a disease, which is most
powerfully affected by music, and from this cir-
-cumstance a disease known as Tarantismus being

being one allmost analogous in its character to the symptoms produced by this insect, has as already seen, been honored with the name of this disgusting creature: The existence of this disease has been denied by a great number of eminent men, and the symptoms ascribed to the sting of this spider also: A french naval surgeon, whose name I do not call to mind, believing it to be nothing more than a popular superstition, visited in Naples one of those women, who make a livelihood by permitting themselves to be stung by a tarantula, and then exhibiting their grace in dancing to music, while under the effects of the poison; and by much persuasion induced her to allow him to apply the insect to her arm; he did so! and after the lapse of a few minutes, the music struck up a solemn air, which certainly affected the women wonderfully she wept, groaned, and made the piteous lamentation: when suddenly the music changed to a lively dancing tune, and when she started up and after looking

around the room in a bewildered manner, commenced dancing in a most violent, and lubricious style, so that the perspiration streamed from her, until her garments were quite wet; suddenly in the middle of one of her wild fegiues, she threw up her hands, and fell to the floor, to all appearances, in a severe fainting fit, but on the Doctors offering to raise her, they were told that she would come too of herself after a few minits which she certainly did, ready for another performance After paying the exorbitant fee, she was to her great indignation informed, that she had not been bitten at all, but that she had sustained a very severe pinch, by the finger and thumb of the doctor. The scorpion and centipede are also capable of inflicting a very dangerous sting, and their sting is more to be dreaded as it is commonly inflicted without any admonition, and without the insect being seen, as when is found among woods, and wood piles, it is of the same colour as the wood, and in other situations

its colour changes according to circumstances. They rarely sting unless angered, or suddenly alarmed with no chance for escape: one thing is very remarkable in connection with them, and that is, that tobacco or the presence of tobacco, renders them so enraged, that they will bite and sting at anything in their reach indiscriminately, this I have witnessed on several occa= =sions, in the East Indies and South America.

Of all the variety of poisoned wounds, those inflicted by venemous serpents, are the most to be dreaded; added to the uncontrolable disgust and dread occasioned by even the sight of a serpent, are the dreadfull agonies, which surround their dreadfull, and commonly fatal sting. It is a well known fact, that only such of the serpent tribe are venemous, who possess the celebrated fang, but still as a tribe they are to be dreaded, for in those who are fortunately deprived of this fang, we find a most terrible constrictive power, which is

equally as dangerous in some case as the poison, for example, there is the boa constrictor, who can with ease, crush the bones as if they were of glass, in the largest ox; the common black snake of our country, sometimes attains a formidable size, and is quite dangerous adversary. Next to the Cobra di Capella of India, the rattlesnake is perhaps the most deadly of all the serpent tribe, a rattlesnake bite has proved fatal in nine hours, and one by the cobra in less than an hour.

The bite of Rabid Animals, is also one of the most terrible in its results, and one that is most common of the dangerous variety of this class of wounds. Several prophylactics have been recommended, but I must coincide with Prof Semple, who says the only sure one is decapitation of all the dogs. After an individual has been bitten by a rabid animal there a great variety of symptoms present themselves of the most appalling nature, and one in which

great stress is laid by all writers, is the difficulty
experienced in deglutition, particularly when
fluids are attempted to be introduced. In my
carefully perusing Watsons practice and other
works on this subject, I can find no mention
of a case being cured, when the well marked
symptoms of Hydrophobia have became developed,
indeed Watson, and all the other writers, seem to
have made no attempts to treat a patient
suffering with this malady medicinally, but
according to Erichsen, "recollecting that you have"
"an exausting disease to deal with, you must"
"support the patient with good nourishing food"
"if he can take it, and if not with stimulants"
"and beef essence." apart from this then attention
seems to have been wholly directed to forcing into
the patients stomach, when — as Watson says — "even"
"the noise occasioned by the pouring of them from"
"one vessel to another, are sufficient to throw"

"the patient, into the most violent convulsions."
Hydrophia is sometimes met with during the
course of some other disease, and is then called
"sympathetic Hydrophobia," and is quite amenable
to treatment.

Persons who have been bitten by a
mad dog, have sometimes escaped without one
single bad symptom, because the teeth in passing
the clothing are apt to have the virus wiped off
and so none is conveyed to the wound; they have
also died from the effects of having a dog in
this state lick their hand, when there was an
abrasion of the skin, or a cut, which would
materially aid the absorption of the virus.

There is a very slight chance for the virus
of the rattlesnake, ~~being~~ being prevented from entering
the wound in a similar manner, by reason of their peculiarly formed fangs. The fangs of the snake are hollow
tubes, with a minute opening in the point; they also

also are in apposition at their root, with a small sack or pouch, which secretes the poison matter, there is an opening in this sack, corresponding to the commencement of the canal in both, so, that when the fang is struck into a body, the pressure that is communicated by the shock to the pouch, forces a dash of poison to pass into the canal, and by it is transmitted to the further opening, and injected into the wound; so that unless a plug of clothing stops up as it were the passage, the poison must almost inevitably pass into the puncture.

Dissecting wounds, are a very common species of wound among students, and medical men, and are seldom of much importance; Ericksen, " says " that certainly the introduction of putrescent " " matter into the system, may be justly considered " " a serious matter, but if it is mostly in post = " " = mortem, examinations, that the most severe cases " " have been met with before putrefaction has taken "

"place"; every student frequently, punctures or cuts himself while dissecting, and yet no unpleasant results often follow, though there are cases on record, of death having been occasioned by them and many cases, in which serious illness has resulted.

The best treatment in all cases of poisoned wounds, is suction, which can do no injury, unless the lips should be cracked or in other ways present a raw surface, for the absorbtion of the virus; in the event of this failing, or if there should be circumstances forbidding it, the actual cautery is the next best, acting on the toxicological law, that "heat kills animal poisons"; taking a red hot iron, and thoroughly burning out the part is a terrible procedure, but one which is fully justified by the emergency of the case.

There have been a great many popular remedies and antidotes, for the cure

of poisoning, and none of them seem to stand the test of practice, though all have the appearance of truth, in theory; the one which in some parts of the country, has received the largest share of patronage is whiskey or brandy, for snake bites, it being affirmed that if the person bitten can be so far put under the effects of either of the above, as to render him intoxicated, the poison is neutralized and the individual safe. But in my humble opinion the whiskey would be as dangerous to the patient, as the poison, or the remedy as bad as the disease; for if the man has got to die, why not die like a gentleman, by the poison, than like a dog, by inflamation of the brain or mania potus, brought on, as is recorded, in one case by a mans drinking three quarts of whiskey, before he felt the effects of the liquor sufficiently to be removed from danger of death by snake poisoning - Another method is to excise portion of the integument and tissues

down to the bone, for some distance around the wound; how are we to know ~~to know~~ how much to excise, without first knowing how rapidly the virus is circulated; and if it is in the neighborhood of large and important blood vessels, these would have to be ligated, and the patient probably be as much exposed to death, from the operation, as from the operation of the poison —

In the treatment of all poisoned wounds why are not our homoeopathic remedys as applicable as in other diseases. for instance in the treatment of rattlesnake bites, we have for our guide the pathogenesis of Crotalus Hor. and to guide us in the selection of our remedy. I do not understand our law of similia to compel us to use Crotalus as the remedial agent, in a case of this kind, for to my understanding, we are not to use the same drug that made the disease, for the cure

of it, but to use one which has a the greatest similarity of action, and in this case we have a number to choose from, Belladonna, Abrotanum, Tipura Tonka, Thridium, Nux Vom, Lachesis Trigonocephalus, Hyoscyamus Niger, Rhus Toxicodendron, Cinchona Maculatum, Arsenic &c: but I do not wish to be understood as advocating the use, as in infinitesimal doses, as in the treatment of ordinary diseases, but use them in quantities large enough to suit the occasion which we can do, without departing from our great therapeutic law "similia similibus curantur," for in whatever quantities our remedies are used, either in massive doses or in the attenuated manner, they are still homoeopathic, if used homoeopathically to the disease.

In the treatment of dissection wounds a drop of Nitric Acid $\frac{1}{3}$ss, dropped into the wound,

will in most cases remove the danger of any unpleasant sequelae, but in aggravated cases there are no doubt a number of remedies in our Materia Medica, that would be found appropriate to the disease. It is rarely that a wound of this discription, results in anything more than a slight, swelling or inflamation of the part injured, but those cases recorded which have been very serious in their results, if a person of scrofulous habit, should be so injured, he would be likely from the state of his general constitution, to be either seriously ill, or have his health permanently affected, or even lose his life.

The symptoms commonly ascribed to wounds of this nature, are first a swelling and inflamation of the part, dizziness languor, &c, swelling and suppuration of the Glands of the axilla, or groin, or parotid

glands, delirium, and sometimes death. A wound received while examining a body, that has met its death by erysipelas, phlebitis, purulent infection or the operation for hernia is invariably unpleasant in its results, and when inflicted by a spicula of bone, or by the tooth of a saw, is more than ordinarily dangerous, and troublesome in its treatment to say the least.

Before closing this subject I wish to say a few more words on the subject of snake bites; as I have lately read some very good remarks in the North American Medico Chirurgical Review, by S. Weir Mitchell M.D. Lecturer on physiology, on this subject, from investigations that he made on this variety of wounds. In describing the venom, he says "The venom of the rattlesnake is a yellow albuminous fluid, of an acid reaction, of a specific

gravity, of 1044, and coagulable at a tempera=
=ture of 140° to 160°, F. Its toxic activity is
slightly affected by boiling, and not at all
by freezing. Acids, and alkalis, alchohol
&c, do not destroy its virulence, and when
dried it retains its dreaded power for an
unlimited period of time. On analysis it
discovers at least two albuminous sub=
=stances; one coagulable by boiling, either
alone, or diluted by water, and the other
only by alchohol, and constituting the
active principal of the virus, and is so
called crotaline." — It may be as well
to state here, that these remarks of his
are all entirely original with himself,
they being all founded on actual experi=
=ment, with the living serpent, as well
as by inoculation of the virus. — It also

appear, that the sting of the snake is not so infallibly fatal, as popular belief, makes it appear to be, inasmuch as there are several accidents or circumstances, that may occur which will render the sting harmless, or at least produce no dangerous symptoms.

Fontana, one of the first physicians who investigated this matter admits, that the fang of the serpent is pierced with a canal, but says the canal of the tooth does not communicate with the duct at all, but that the venin is transmitted by a groove running along the side of the tooth; and that the venin is not expelled from the sack, by the shock of the sting but by the voluntary contraction of the temporal muscles. Dr Mitchell agrees with him in part

as he acknowledges the action of the temporal muscle, but opposes the manner of the pain of the wing: he also says, if the fang is not perfectly erected at the time of striking, the duct does not communicate properly with the canal, and so the wine is forced out alongside of the fang, and being thus mixed with saliva, is so much diluted, that even if it enters the wound it is almost innocuous; and also that there is a strong probability of its pulling on the skin at some distance from the puncture, and being in that situation perfectly harmless.

The treatment, he divides into local, and constitutional. The local is also divided into suction, and ligature, suction when the ligature cannot be ap-

=plied, and both if convenient, when the ligature is admissable.

The ligature should consist of a broad band, put round the limb, as near to the wound as possible, and kept there, until it became almost unbearable from the pain, then to be loosened slightly, keeping the finger on the pulse, and the moment the pulse becomes slower, or more feeble, tighten the band, this to be repeated at the discretion of the physician until he thinks the venom is all expended; by this procedure, a small amount of the poison is admitted at at time, and thus preparing the system for throwing off or effectually combating its action.

The constitutional treatment consists in administering stimulants in

sufficient quantities, to produce exhilaration but not complete intoxication, as this is not desirable, on account of the prostration that occurs. He also administers the following prescription as an antidote called Bibrons Antidote, named after the celebrated naturalist, Prof Paul Bibron, Prince of Wurtemburg.

℞ Potassii, iodidi grs iv

Aqoh. Chl. Comis, " ij.

Bromini. ℥ v.

S. Ten drops of this mixture diluted with a table spoonful or two of brandy, constitute a dose, to be repeated if necessary-

On account of the paralyzed state of the muscles of the pharynx, this mixture must be exibited before the second stage sets in,

or otherwise there will be inability to counteract it, and of course it can do no good.

Dr Mitchell in summing up says. "alcohol is to be looked upon as a merely counter-active agent; in a word, as a stimulus to be employed to burn the patient, over the prostration caused by venom poisoning. More than this it certainly is not, and those who have looked upon it as a direct chemical antidote, and as available for local treatment, need but to be told to settle the matter, that a mixture of alcohol and venom is not less poisonous than unmixed venom."

Respectfully
James G. Gilchrist